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ABSTRACT

To provide data on student demographics and enrollment trends each year, California's Los Rios Community College District develops a profile of current students. Data are drawn from fall fourth-week census reports completed by the district's three community colleges each September. Data collected for fall 1997 indicated the following: (1) after a three-year decline beginning in 1991, enrollment stabilized in fall 1994 and increased by 4.1% in fall 1996 and by 4.2% in fall 1997; (2) weekly student contact hours increased from 479,750 in fall 1996 to 494,796 in fall 1997; (3) the proportion of ethnic minorities in the district's student body increased from 29% in 1987 to 40% in 1997; (4) in fall 1997, white students comprised 56.5% of the student body, Asians 16.3%, Latinos 11.1%, African Americans 10.4%, and Native Americans 2%; (5) the proportion of students 20 years of age and under remained relatively stable between fall 1992 and fall 1997 at 26.9% and 26.8%, respectively; (6) in fall 1997, 6% fewer students than in fall 1992 were attending evening courses, while 5.5% more students were attending both evening and day courses; and (7) the proportion of students enrolled full time increased from 23.5% in fall 1992 to 28.1% in fall 1997. (BCY)

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Fall 1997 Student Profile

Betty Glyer-Culver

Los Rios Community College District
Office of Institutional Research

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Los Rios Community College District
Office of Institutional Research

Fall 1997 Student Profile

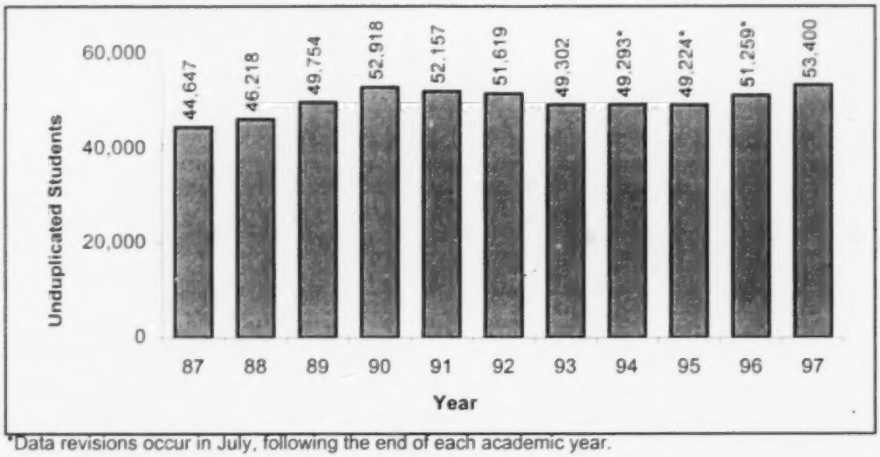
Based upon First Census Data

October 1997

This is the eighth in a series of Los Rios Community College District (LRCCD) student profiles. These annual summaries provide the District and its colleges – American River College (ARC), Cosumnes River College (CRC), and Sacramento City College (SCC)—with data on student demographics and enrollment trends – important information for successful planning to meet the needs of our changing student clientele. This report presents student enrollment data and Weekly Student Contact Hours (WSCH) based on the official Fall First Census reports that are issued for the fourth week of classes. It is also based upon demographic data generated from the official Fall Fourth Week Census research database. Analysis of demographic data since Fall 1993 includes all courses which have started as of the fourth week of classes, in addition to all full-term and first nine-week offerings. Analysis of student demography is based upon data that *excludes* those students who have dropped their courses by first census.

District Enrollment

Chart 1
LRCCD Enrollment: Fall 1987 to Fall 1997



*Data revisions occur in July, following the end of each academic year.

The cyclical enrollment pattern shown in Chart 1 tends to reflect variations in state funding and adult population trends. Fee increases which took effect in 1993 probably contributed to the rather large enrollment drop for that year. During the three-year decline through Fall 1993, new enrollment management decisions were put into effect as efforts to stabilize enrollment. These efforts were successful. In Fall 1994 enrollment declined by less than 0.02% (9 fewer students), and in Fall 1995 by only 0.1%, (69 fewer students). In Fall 1996, enrollment increased 4.1% over the 1995 levels, the first annual increase since 1990. Los Rios enrollment increases continued in Fall 1997, which experienced a 4.2% increase.

Enrollment increased at each of the Los Rios colleges in Fall 1997: by 4.5% at ARC (to 21,214), by 1% at CRC (to 8,652 students, noting that Folsom Lake and El Dorado enrollment figures are now reported separately), by 3.8% at SCC (to 18,434) and 10.4% at the Folsom Lake and El Dorado Centers (to 5,100).

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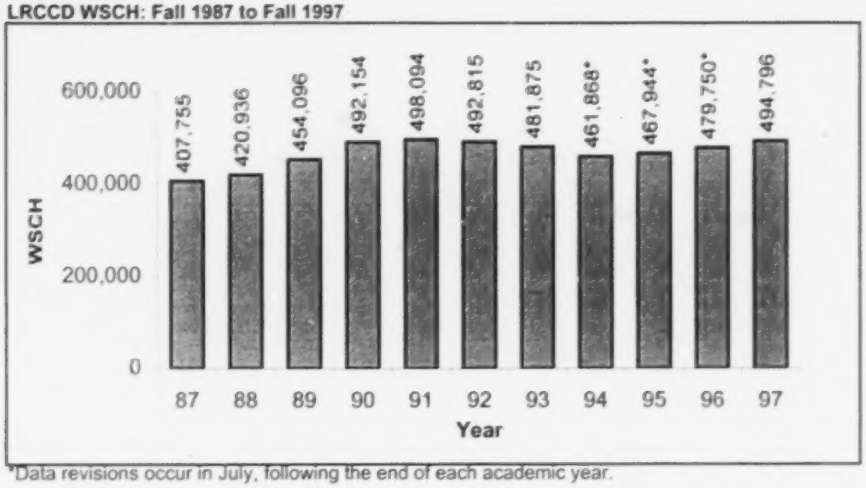
District Weekly Student Contact Hours

Chart 2
LRCCD WSCH: Fall 1987 to Fall 1997



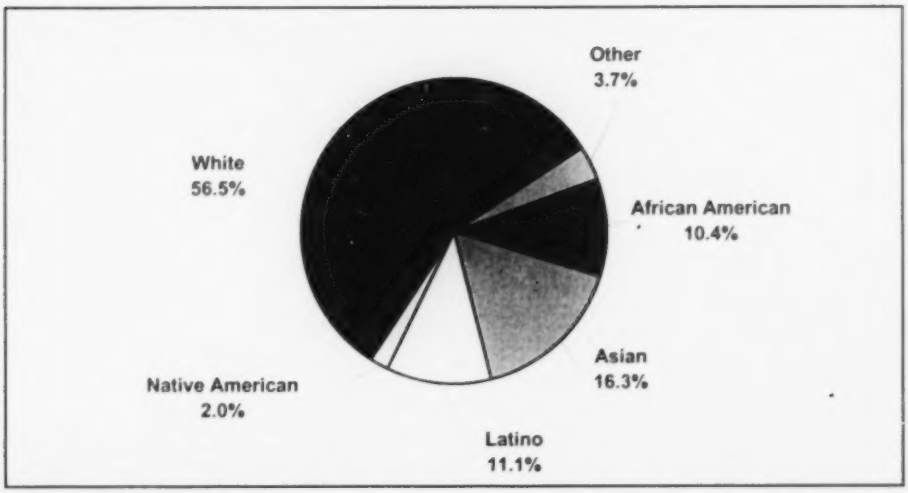
*Data revisions occur in July, following the end of each academic year.

Similar to District enrollment in 1997, Weekly Student Contact Hours (WSCH) increased, but by slightly less (3.1%). As indicated by Chart 2, this is the third annual increase that has ended the three-year pattern of decreasing WSCH that started in 1992. The largest annual decline in WSCH over this eleven year period occurred in 1994, when the average student took fewer units than the previous year. But WSCH increased by 1.3% in 1995, when enrollment decreased by 0.1%, indicating that unit load was on the rise again.

District Enrollment by Ethnicity

Chart 3 depicts the District's ethnic mix in Fall 1997. The total proportion of ethnic minorities among the Los Rios student population continues to increase, from 29% in 1987 to 40% in 1997.

Chart 3
LRCCD Enrollment by Ethnicity: Fall 1997



Asian students continue to be the largest minority group enrolled at Los Rios, increasing from 13.4% of all students in Fall 1992 to 16.3% in the Fall 1997 semester. The remaining ethnic composition of the District's Fall 1997 enrollment is as follows: Latinos, 11.1%; African Americans, 10.4%; Native Americans, 2.0%; and the remaining 3.7% include students from various other ethnic minority groups and

those whose ethnicity was unspecified. The proportion of white student enrollment at Los Rios community colleges continues to decline, from 60.5% of total enrollment in Fall 1992 to 56.5% in Fall 1997.

The 40% enrollment of ethnic minority students in Fall is substantially higher than the proportions of the ethnic minority population living in the surrounding Sacramento-Yolo Metropolitan Statistical Area (CMSA) served by the Los Rios colleges. The July 1995 CMSA data reports 28.8% of Sacramento's area population are members of a minority group.

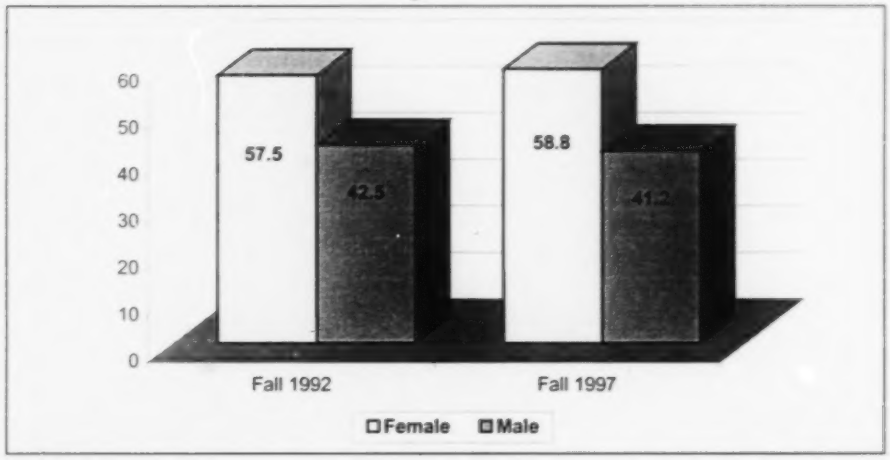
There are some interesting differences in Fall 1997 enrollment based on ethnicity at the college level. SCC enrolls a much higher proportion of African Americans (13.4%), Asians (23.3%), and Latino's (14.4%) when compared to District enrollment proportions. ARC enrollment based on ethnicity shows a lower proportion in each of the ethnic categories and a higher proportion of white (66.1%) student enrollment. CRC's enrollment pattern based on ethnicity generally mirrors the District's proportions.

District Enrollment by Gender

As shown in Chart 4, enrollment by gender in Fall 1997 has changed very little since Fall 1992. The proportion of women increased fairly steadily throughout the 1980's, accounting for more than 75% of the District's enrollment growth between 1978 (when it was 54%) and 1989 (when it reached 58%, an all-time high). The proportions of men and women enrolled at Los Rios colleges have fluctuated less than 1% since 1985.

The proportions of women enrolled at Los Rios colleges increased 1.3% from Fall 1992 to Fall 1997. ARC and SCC Fall enrollment based on gender reflects the District's enrollment proportions. CRC's enrollment proportions of women to men for Fall 1997 varies slightly from the District, with 60.6% female and 39.4% male enrollment.

Chart 4
LRCCD Enrollment by Gender: Fall 1992 and Fall 1997



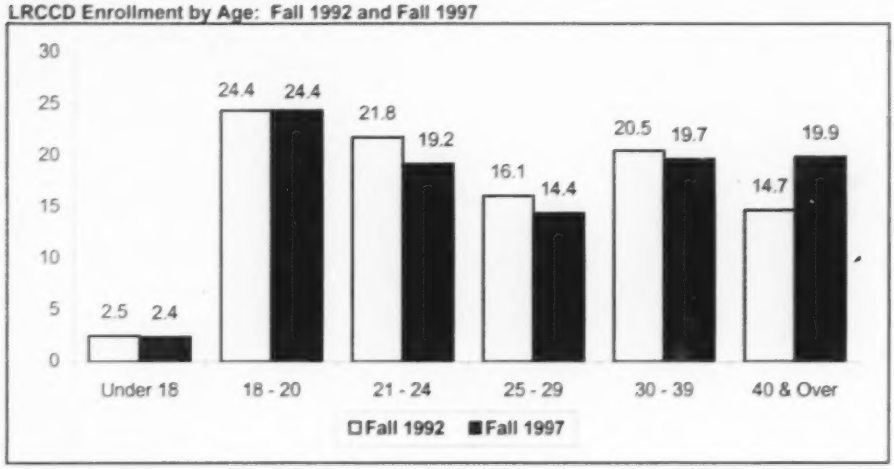
Fall 1997 District enrollment by gender based on ethnicity illustrates differing enrollment patterns within several ethnic categories. African American enrollment has a substantially higher proportion of female students (62.0%) than males (38.0%), while Asians are enrolled in relatively similar proportions of female (52.2%) and male (47.8%) students. The proportions of Latino and Native American enrollment generally mirror the District pattern.

District Enrollment by Age Group

The trend of declining proportions in 20-and-under enrollment may be starting to stabilize as demonstrated in Chart 4. The proportion of students 20-and-under remained relatively unchanged from

Fall 1992 to Fall 1997, 26.9% and 26.8% respectively. Of interest is the declining proportions of enrollment of students in both the 21 – 24 and 25 – 29 age categories. The proportions of students enrolled who were 21 – 24 declined from 21.8% in Fall 1992 to 19.2% in Fall 1997. Proportional enrollment of students aged 25 – 29 was 16.1% in Fall 1992 compared to a lower 14.4% in Fall 1997. The most significant growth continues to be with those students 40-and-over, increasing from 14.7% in Fall 1992 to 19.9% in Fall 1997. Enrollment of students 30 – 39 has remained relatively unchanged.

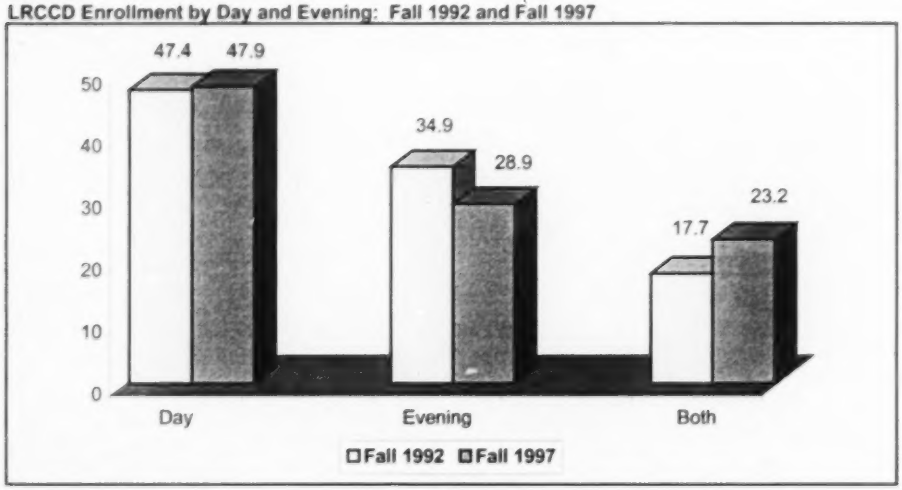
Chart 5
LRCCD Enrollment by Age: Fall 1992 and Fall 1997



District Enrollment by Day and Evening

Chart 6 compares the proportions of day and evening attendance for Fall 1992 and Fall 1997. Figures indicate that 6% fewer students are attending courses that are offered during the evening, while 5.5% more students in Fall 1997 are attending *both* day and evening courses than were five years earlier. The proportion of students enrolled in day only courses remains relatively stable at 47.9% of Fall 1997 enrollment.

Chart 6
LRCCD Enrollment by Day and Evening: Fall 1992 and Fall 1997



At each of the Los Rios colleges, attendance patterns have varied over the last six years. The proportions of students taking courses during the day, only, have remained relatively stable at both ARC and SCC (increasing slightly from 52.8% in Fall 1992 to 53.4% in Fall 1997 at SCC and declining from 48.5% to 47.4% at ARC). CRC experienced increased enrollment in the proportions of day only

attendance, from 37.2% in Fall 1992 to 39.6% in Fall 1997. The proportions of students who take courses only offered during the evening have decreased at all three colleges: from 35.2% to 29.5% at ARC; from 43.2% to 34.9% at CRC; and from 29.0% to 22.3% at SCC. The proportions taking *both* day and evening courses have increases at all three colleges: from 16.3% to 23.1% at ARC, from 19.7% to 25.4% at CRC, and from 18.2% to 24.2% at SCC.

Unit Load by District Students

Three categories of unit-load are illustrated in Chart 7 to demonstrate trends in students' course loads from Fall 1992 to Fall 1997. "Light load" students are those taking fewer than six units; "mid-load" students are those taking six to 11.9 units; and "full-time" students are those with 12 or more units. Seventy-two percent of Los Rios students are part-time (mid and light-load) students, down from 76.5% in Fall 1992.

Chart 7
LRCCD Student Course Load: Fall 1992 and Fall 1997

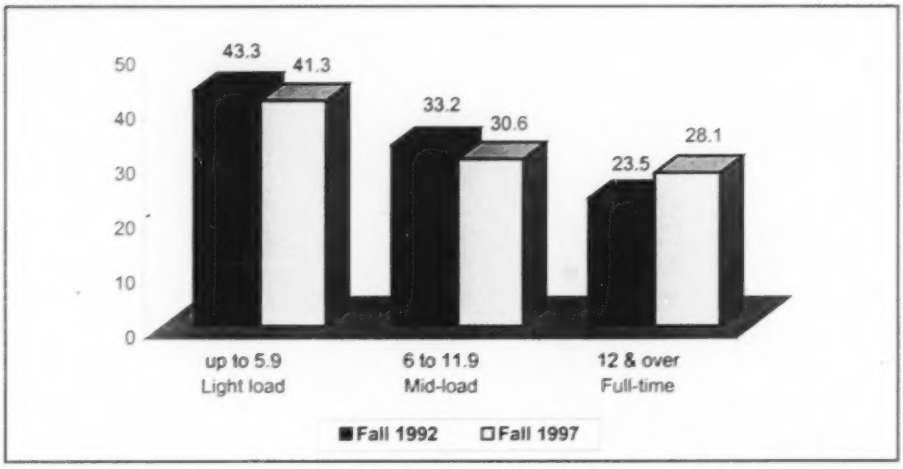


Chart 7 demonstrates not only the decline in light and mid-load course taking proportions, but the increase in full-time enrollment, up from 23.5% in Fall 1992 to 28.1% in Fall 1997. The Los Rios student enrolled in an average of 7.56 units in the Fall 1997 semester.

Shifts in unit load have been of great importance because funding for student services was for many years based on full-time equivalent students (FTE). Under this funding formula, light and mid-load students were not counted individually even though they required individualized student services. The funding formula implemented as part of the AB1725 reform package does include a "head count factor" for student services; however funding is currently at only 52.7% of the agreed upon standard for student services, so the strain on this portion of the colleges' funds continues.

Among the District's colleges Sacramento City College has the greatest proportion of full-time students (33.3%) in Fall 1997. American River College has 27.0% and CRC has 24.6%. It remains clear that all of the colleges are still predominantly part-time institutions.

Conclusions

The data presented in this report show that enrollment stabilized in Fall 1994 after a three-year period of decline and has increased in both Fall 1996 (by 4.1%) and Fall 1997 (by 4.2%).

Longer term demographic trends continued in Fall 1997. The proportions of ethnic minorities in the student body continued to grow while the male/female ratio remained relatively constant. The eighteen year trend toward an older student body continues, with approximately 54% of all students 25 or older.

Attendance patterns have varied over the past six years with fewer students attending courses offered during the evening and more attending *both* day and evening courses in Fall 1997.

It is generally suggested that "funding drives enrollment" in California community colleges. Historically, these colleges were open to virtually all California residents without charge until Fall 1984, when the Legislature established the first enrollment fee. By Spring 1993, a 67% increase over the most recently set levels, with a "differential" fee of an additional $40 per unit for students already holding a bachelor's degree, was put into effect. This was followed by the Fall 1993 enrollment drop of 5%, much steeper than the 1% decline in each of the previous two years. But it appears that enrollment stabilized in Fall 1994 and may now be on the increase beginning with Fall 1996 and continuing with Fall 1997. The $40 differential fee for bachelor degree holders was eliminated in Spring 1995 and adult population in greater Sacramento continues to increase, also fueling enrollment growth at Los Rios colleges. Monitoring and analyzing the trends in student enrollment, demographics and student loads to assess the future impact of funding levels, fee increases, and other factors will be very important for future planning.

This report was written by Betty Glyer-Culver, Research Analyst, and is based on data generated from the LRCCD Research Database, developed and managed by Minh La, Systems Hardware and Software Performance Analyst.

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